

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to tell you about my fellowship experience this summer. I spent the summer of 2013 interning at Advocates for Children of New York, located in New York City. The organization serves low-income students and families on educational matters. My internship this summer was the best that I have had for a variety of reasons, including the intelligent and supportive staff, the intellectual growth that I experienced, and the consistent communication I had with clients. Before law school, I taught in the New Orleans public school system where I had consistent personal interactions with students and families all day every day. One of the greatest challenges I have faced during law school is the lack of connection with the community and with the individuals I want to serve. This summer, I was able to get to know clients and build these relationships that are so important to me. Being able to apply my legal knowledge to the educational issues that I care about while working directly with individuals confirmed that I made the right decision to go to law school and exposed me to the kind of career path that I seek.

Out of the eight cases that I worked on this summer, two in particular stand out to me because of the strong relationships I built with the clients. The first case involved a student named John*. John is 17 year old who was involved in an altercation at school in the fall of 2012. Despite his intention to break up a fight, he was later accused of being involved in the fight and was suspended. Furthermore, another student then filed an order of protection against him. After returning to school, this student called the police and John was arrested for breaking the order of protection. He could not return to school and the school provided essentially no assistance in solving the issue or finding John another school placement. Working on this case was particularly meaningful to me because I was able to serve as the primary contact for John and his family. I conducted the intake and with guidance from my supervisor, was able to make strategic decisions for this case and perform all of the necessary outreach and investigations. Throughout the summer, I met with John multiple times and also met various family members. I went with John to enroll him in summer school and checked in with him multiple times to find out about his classes. Moreover, I spoke with John or a family member almost every day. It was this constant communication and ability to go with the family to important events that made this case so special. I felt as though I really understood the details of the situation and the needs and concerns of the clients. This information allowed me to be a strong, persuasive advocate. It also made my work on the case feel rewarding. Despite the obstacles we faced throughout the summer, John and his family were always thankful and willing to problem solve with me.

The second case that stands out to me involved a 7 year old student named Cara*. Cara has a social disability, and we were working to ensure that she was receiving proper support services. Because of Cara's age and disability, I only met her once and was not able to build a strong relationship with her. However, I spent a lot of time with her mother and was able to better understand Cara's needs through that relationship. I heard many stories about Cara outside of the classroom setting. I also heard about the mother's concerns and dreams for her daughter. Moreover, I learned a lot about the mother on a personal level and was able to appreciate how hard she worked to provide for her

daughter and encourage her intellectual, social and emotional growth. Having a deeper understanding of the family and the student allowed me to a better advocate on their behalf. It also brought life to the research and writing I worked on for the case.

All of the cases I worked on were incredibly meaningful and important to me, but it was those where I had a personal connection with the client that stand out to me. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to meet these resilient clients, and I plan on being updated about the progress of their cases. Working in an environment that encourages and supports these types of relationships is now an essential factor that I look for in my job search. I look forward to an exciting career that combines legal knowledge with personal relationships, and I am eager to continue building strong relationships with clients in the future.

Thank you for your support in allowing me to pursue my internship this past summer.

Sincerely,
Caroline Alpert

George Washington University Law School 2014



Advocates for Children of New York
Protecting every child's right to learn

August 29, 2013

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II - Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Caroline Alpert, George Washington University

Dear Dan,

I had the pleasure of serving as Caroline Alpert's supervisor during her 10 week internship at Advocates for Children this summer.

During her time here, Caroline worked on a wide variety of cases and issues. At the beginning of the summer, she dove into working on one of our impact litigation cases, analyzing various allegations to help us be better positioned in drafting a response. She also worked extensively on 5 different direct services cases. She researched appropriate educational placements for two clients, and got one student who had been out of school for 10 months enrolled in a summer program. In several cases, impartial hearing requests were filed, and Caroline had the opportunity to attend resolution sessions and observe an impartial hearing. She took the lead at the resolution sessions, and did important research for one of the impartial hearings. One of the cases she worked on was for my client, and Caroline played a huge role in securing appropriate services for the student. She wrote a very comprehensive impartial hearing request, and conducted a successful pendency hearing that was scheduled with only a few days' notice.

Throughout the summer, we had weekly check-ins, and Caroline was always very on top of her cases. The other attorneys she worked with consistently had positive feedback about both her work and her connection with clients. In a very short amount of time she made a very large impact on these students' lives.

In addition, Caroline worked on a policy project relating to charter schools and discipline policies. This project was ongoing throughout the summer, and Caroline did a great job of balancing it with her other work. The scope and nature of the project also changed over the summer, and Caroline adjusted easily to the new tasks asked of her.

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Finally, Caroline worked on an appeal to the State Review Office of a decision from an impartial hearing. It was a complex undertaking, and she was a huge asset. She wrote a strong 20 page draft of the memorandum of law, which centered on a contract issue that was one of first impression in our office. She was diligent about asking questions, and the attorney supervising her commented that Caroline's depth of thought about the issues was readily apparent, and that Caroline suggested making the very argument that the attorney had been contemplating.

In general, those that worked with Caroline this summer, both attorneys and clients, found her thoughtful and genuinely interested in growing as an attorney and helping obtain the best outcome possible for the clients.

Please let me know if you have any questions or I can be of assistance in any way. We were thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Caroline.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michera Brooks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michera Brooks
Staff Attorney